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ABSTRACT

Results of a survey concerning accreditation are presented based on 374 responses provided by chief executive officers and other college officials. The findings, which were statistically adjusted to produce national estimates, provide information on: respondents' experience with the accreditation process; issues concerning institutional accreditation and specialized accreditation; and the way that the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation's Assembly of National Postsecondary Education Organizations can work to support and improve the accreditation process. Findings include: 90% of respondents felt that institutional accreditation provides a useful index of institutional quality; about 13,600 programs were accredited by specialized accrediting bodies at three-quarters of the nation's campuses; 75% of respondents reported that specialized accreditation provides a useful index of program quality; and 70% of respondents agreed that most of their programs could benefit from the self-study required by specialized accrediting agencies. A facsimile of the questionnaire is appended, along with a description of the stratification design, weighting procedure, and response rates. (SW)

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SURVEY OF ACCREDITATION ISSUES 1986

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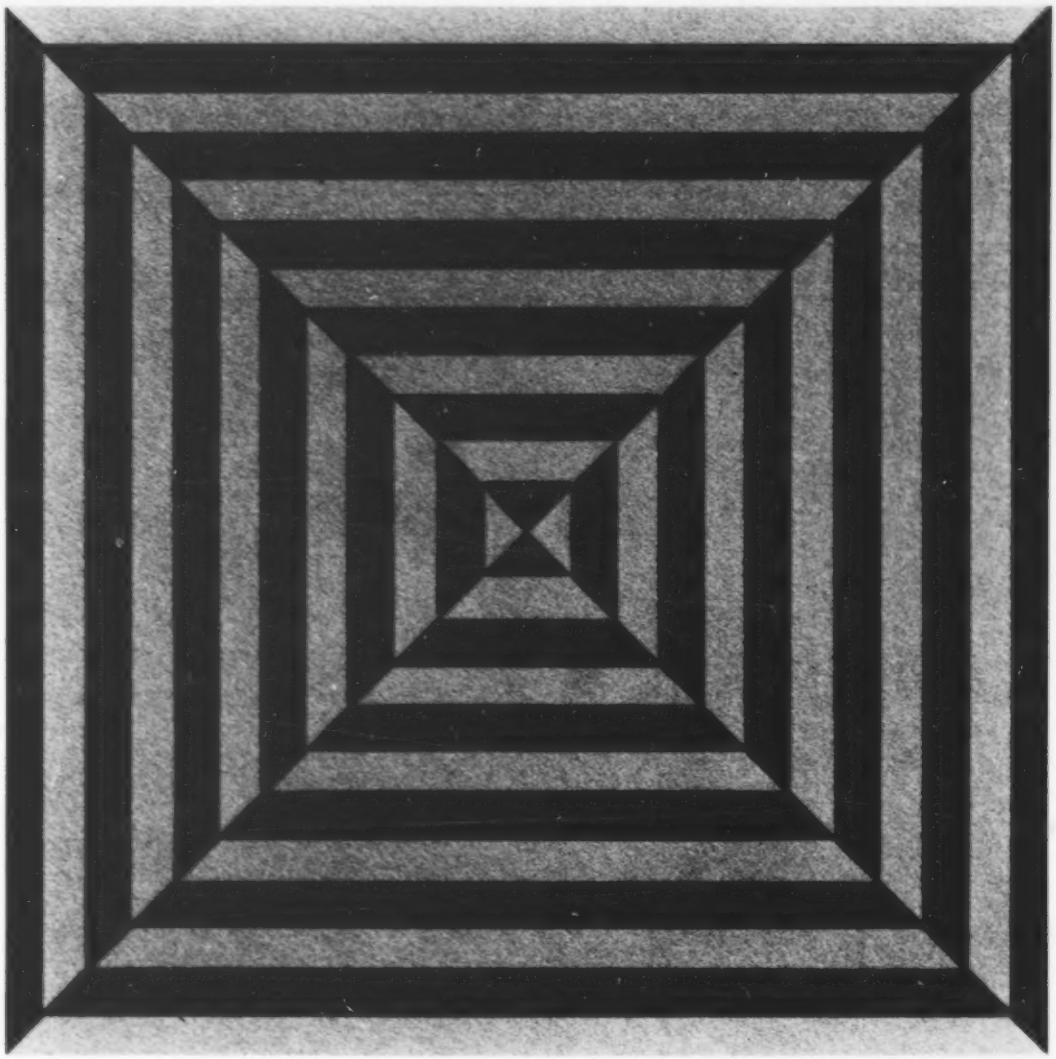

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Survey of Accreditation Issues 1986

Charles J. Andersen

Higher Education Panel Reports
Number 74 April 1987

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HIGHLIGHTS

This report describes the results of a survey of presidents, provosts, academic deans and other officials from a sample of 520 institutions. Responses, which were received from 72 percent of the institutions, have been statistically adjusted to produce national estimates (see Appendix B).

There are two major categories of accreditation: institutional and specialized. Institutional accreditation considers characteristics of the entire institution—including not only its educational offerings, but its other attributes such as student services, financial condition, and administrative strength. Institutional accrediting bodies may be either regional or national. In contrast, specialized accreditation focuses on a specific program within the institution and usually has close ties to the professional association in the field of specialization. Most of the questions in this survey were specifically directed at either one or the other type of accreditation.

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) is a nongovernmental association of accrediting agencies that periodically reviews the work of its members and others, and publicly recognizes those that meet or exceed its provisions.

Institutional Accreditation

- Ninety percent of the survey respondents agreed that institutional accreditation provides a useful index of institutional quality.

- Three-fifths of the respondents indicated that institutional accreditation is extremely useful as a tool for self-evaluation; just over half said it was extremely useful as a stimulus for improvement; but only one-fifth identified it as extremely useful as a criterion for eligibility for federal funds.

Specialized Accreditation

- In 1986 there were approximately 13,600 programs accredited by specialized accrediting bodies at three-quarters of the nation's 3,200 campuses.

- In the last three years, approximately 7,700 visits were made by the specialized accrediting bodies to examine programs.

- Three-quarters of all survey respondents reported that specialized accreditation provides a useful index of program quality. A somewhat smaller proportion (68 percent) of the respondents from two-year institutions agreed with that assessment.

- Seventy percent of the respondents agreed that most of their programs subject to specialized accreditation could benefit from the self-study required by specialized accrediting agencies.

- Two-thirds of the respondents agreed that specialized accreditation helps their graduates obtain jobs and job-related credentials such as licenses.

- Few respondents (less than one-tenth) said that specialized accreditation precluded the need for other means of program evaluation.

Strengthening Accreditation

- Half of the respondents agreed that *institutional* accreditation needed to be strengthened. Less than one-fifth of the respondents agreed that *specialized* accreditation needed strengthening.

- Of the respondents who indicated that accreditation needed strengthening, four-fifths agreed that greater cooperation among the accrediting bodies would help achieve that end. Two-thirds agreed that regional accreditation would be strengthened if the *regional* accrediting bodies had common (national) standards.

- Nine out of ten of the respondents who indicated that accreditation should be strengthened thought that active involvement of campus chief executive officers (CEOs) in the activities of regional accrediting bodies would help achieve that end. Nearly half thought that CEO involvement in specialized accrediting bodies would help strengthen accreditation.

- Eight out of ten of the survey respondents agreed that recognition of accrediting bodies by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) is a sufficient index of quality and should preclude the federal government's need to compile its own list of recognized accrediting agencies.

BACKGROUND

This survey was undertaken by the American Council on Education in response to national interest in accreditation. Articles in the higher education press[1] about accreditation and the appointment of a self-study advisory panel by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA), in addition to concerns expressed by institutional presidents, contributed to a climate in which the conduct of a systematic examination of several key issues seemed appropriate.

The survey was conducted through the Higher Education Panel (HEP), an ongoing survey research program of the American Council on Education. A four-page questionnaire was mailed to a nationally representative sample of 520 colleges and universities with the request that it be completed by the institution's chief executive officer (CEO). The questionnaire requested information concerning the respondent's experience with accrediting bodies and procedures, opinions concerning the usefulness of accrediting bodies, and opinions on the importance of courses of action that have been proposed to make the accrediting process more effective.

Questionnaires (see Appendix A) were mailed on July 25, 1986. By mid October, 374 responses had been received, or 72 percent of those surveyed. Approximately thirty percent of the respondents were chief executive officers of their campuses. An additional 43 percent were academic vice presidents, provosts or vice provosts, and the remaining quarter were executive vice presidents, institutional researchers, or other officials.

Data from respondents were statistically adjusted using the Panel's stratification design and the weighting technique described in Appendix B. This adjustment means that the report's findings can be interpreted as generally representative of the views of leading officials in the nation's 3,250 colleges and universities.

Appendix A includes a facsimile of the survey instrument. Appendix B includes a description of the stratification design, weighting procedure, and response rates.

[1] "Northwest Accrediting Group Bars Specialized Colleges", *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Vol. 31, No. 13, November 27, 1985, p. 3.

Glenn Dumke, "Accrediting: the Weak Link in Education Reform", *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Vol. 31, No. 18, January 15, 1986, p. 104.

Bice Clemow, "Collegiate Accreditation", *The College Board Review*, No. 138, Winter 1985-86, p. 19.

FINDINGS

The findings are presented in four sections. First, the experience that respondents have had with the accreditation process is described. Second, issues concerning institutional accreditation are reviewed, followed by issues concerning specialized accreditation[2]. The fourth section presents opinions concerning the way in which the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation's (COPA) Assembly of National Postsecondary Education Organizations (ANPEO) can work to support and improve the accreditation process.

[2] There are two major categories of accreditation: institutional and specialized. Institutional accreditation considers characteristics of the entire institution — including not only its educational offerings, but its other attributes such as student services, financial condition, and administrative strength. Institutional accrediting bodies may be either regional or national. In contrast, specialized accreditation focuses on a specific program within the institution and usually has close ties to the professional association in the field of specialization. Most of the questions in this survey were specifically directed at either one or the other type of accreditation.

I. Experience of Respondents

The questionnaire was completed by officials who have had immediate experience with accreditation. Nearly all (94 percent) have helped prepare an institutional self-study or a portion of such a study; sixty-eight percent reported having prepared a program self-study or a portion of it. Two-fifths have served on regional or national institutional accreditation teams, and one-fifth have served on specialized accrediting teams. Sixty-nine percent have attended meetings or conferences of regional or national accrediting bodies; however, only about one-fifth have attended such functions sponsored by the specialized accrediting bodies. Thus, among those administrators who completed the questionnaire, there appears to be greater experience with institutional (regional or national) accreditation than with specialized accreditation.

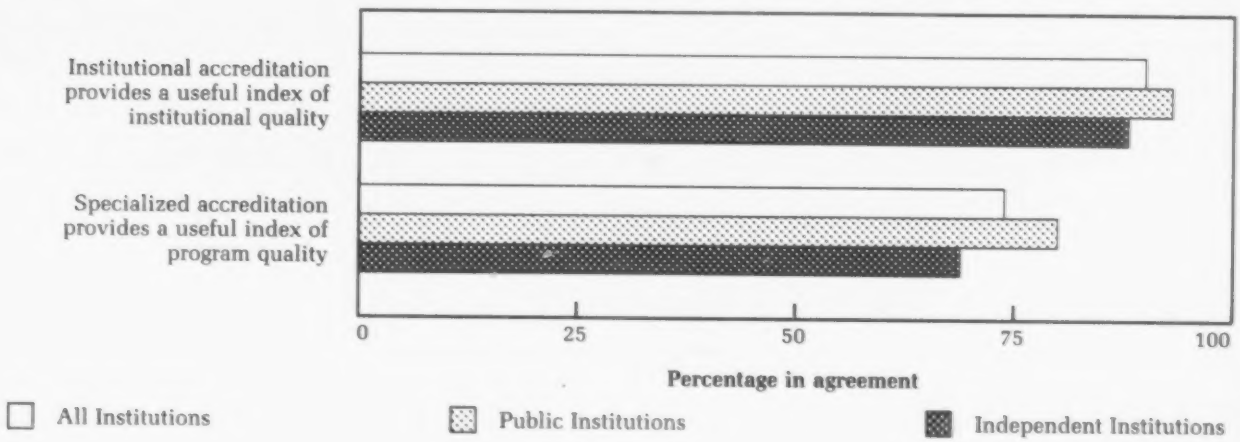
TABLE A—Respondents' Experience with Accreditation

Type of Experience	Percentage of Respondents		
	All Institutions	Public Institutions	Independent Institutions
1. Prepared an institutional self-study or portion of it	94	92	95
2. Prepared a program self-study or portion of it	68	69	66
3. Attended annual meetings or conferences of institutional accrediting bodies	69	62	74
4. Served on a visiting accreditation team for an institutional accrediting body	43	48	39
5. Served on a specialized accreditation visiting team	21	20	21
6. Attended annual meetings or conferences of specialized accrediting bodies	18	13	22

Ninety percent of the institutional responses indicated agreement with the statement that institutional accreditation by regional or national accrediting bodies provides a useful index of institutional quality. Three-quarters of the responses agreed that specialized accreditation provides a useful index of program quality.

Thus, there is widespread agreement that accreditation provides useful indices of quality, even though, as will be seen, there may be disagreement over some of its specific uses or functions.

FIGURE A
Usefulness of Accreditation



Reference: Detailed Tables 2, 5

II. Institutional Accreditation

As used here, institutional accreditation refers to the accreditation of the entire institution. Such accreditation is performed by the nine postsecondary education commissions in the six regional accrediting associations 3 plus American Association of Bible Colleges, Association of Independent Colleges and Schools, National Association of Trade and Technical Schools, Association of Theological Schools in the U.S. and Canada, and National Home Study Council. Institutional accreditation is distinguished from specialized or program accreditation which concerns itself with specific instructional programs such as medicine, law, business administration, music, social work, etc., within the institution.

As noted above, ninety percent of the respondents agreed that institutional accreditation by regional or national bodies provides a useful index of institutional quality. This high level of concurrence was shown by all institutional types except the universities where only 71 percent agreed with the statement (see Detailed Table 2).

Three-fifths of the respondents agreed that institutional accreditation is a sufficient index of quality and should preclude state involvement in matters of institutional quality. A considerably higher share of respondents from independent institutions (67 percent) than from public colleges and universities (55 percent) agreed with that statement.

Agreement that institutional accreditation is a sufficient index of quality and should preclude the need for specialized accreditation was reported by only two-fifths of the respondents. The public and independent sectors showed about the same proportion of agreement on this issue. However, only one-fifth of the university respondents agreed with the idea, in contrast to nearly half of the two-year college respondents (see Detailed Table 2).

[3] The six regional accrediting associations and their nine postsecondary education commissions are:

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools: Commission on Higher Education;

New England Association of Schools and Colleges: Commission on Institutions of Higher Education; Commission on Vocational, Technical, and Career Institutions;

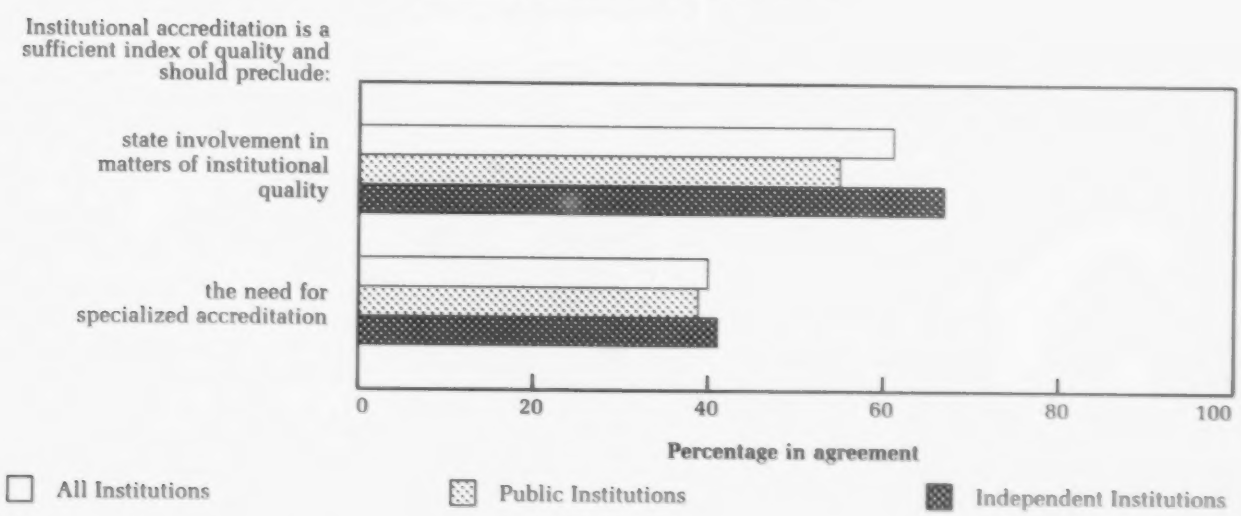
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools: Commission on Institutions of Higher Education;

Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges: Commission on Colleges;

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools: Commission on Colleges; Commission on Occupational Education Institutions;

Western Association of Schools and Colleges: Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities; Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

FIGURE B
Sufficiency of Institutional Accreditation



Reference: Detailed Table 2

Six reasons for institutional accreditation were identified on the survey instrument, and respondents indicated how useful they thought each was, using a scale from five to one, where the high value equaled "extremely useful" and the low, "not useful."

Sixty-three percent of the respondents found accreditation to be extremely useful as a tool for self-evaluation. Slightly more than half indicated that accreditation was extremely useful as a stimulus for improvement, and nearly half gave it the high rating as a means of demonstrating that an institution has standards that are generally accepted in the postsecondary education community. Only an eighth gave the top rating to accreditation as a source of low-cost consultation or as a means of achieving or reinforcing consensus within an institution (see Table B).

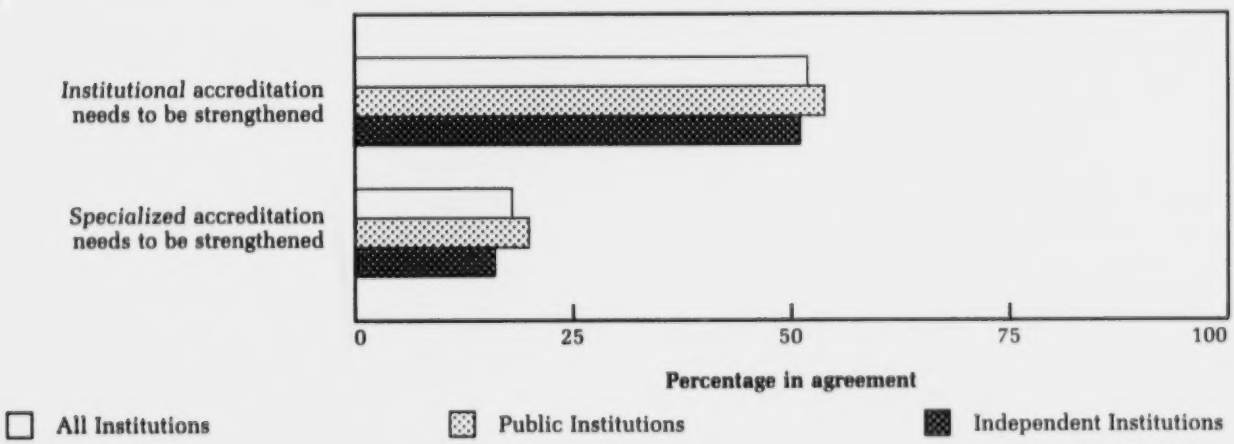
About one-fifth indicated that they thought accreditation was extremely useful as a criterion for eligibility for federal funds. However, fifteen percent scored that reason 2 or 1, which may be interpreted as being not useful.

TABLE B—Usefulness of Selected Functions of Institutional Accreditation

Item	Percentage of Respondents Who Scored Item— Extremely Useful 5	4	3	2	Not Useful 1	No Response
Institutional accreditation is useful as:						
1. a tool for self-evaluation	63	36		1		<1
2. a stimulus for improvement	55	44		1		1
3. demonstrating that an institution has standards that are accepted by the postsecondary education community	45	52		2		<1
4. a criterion of eligibility for federal funds	22	60		15		3
5. a means of achieving consensus among various elements of the institution	13	72		14		<1
6. a source of low-cost consultation	13	63		23		<1

A slight majority (52 percent) of the respondents agreed with the assertion that institutional accreditation needs to be strengthened. On this issue, the opinion of respondents from specialized institutions (e.g. independent schools of law, medicine, business administration, music, etc.) was at odds with the opinion from other types of institutions. Only one-third of the former agreed that institutional accreditation needed strengthening, in contrast to over fifty percent of respondents from all of the other types of institutions. The reasons for this difference cannot be readily determined from the present study's data in-

FIGURE C
Opinion Concerning the Need to Strengthen Accreditation



Reference: Detailed Table 6

asmuch as there were no probing follow-on questions for those who did not think that accreditation needed to be strengthened.

Greater involvement of chief executive officers in the governance of accrediting bodies has been identified by some as a way of strengthening the accreditation process. The utility of such involvement was the subject of one of the questionnaire items directed at those survey respondents who indicated that accreditation should be strengthened. Table C shows that nearly all of the respondents felt that CEOs should be actively involved in regional accrediting agencies; two thirds identified the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) and three-fifths noted national accrediting bodies. Only one-third to two-fifths of the respondents to this question identified the specialized assemblies that are part of COPA as agencies in which there should be greater CEO participation.

TABLE C—Recommended Involvement of CEOs in Accreditation Bodies

Accrediting Body/Interest Group	Percentage of Respondents		
	All Institutions	Public Institutions	Independent Institutions
1. Regional accrediting bodies	92	92	92
2. Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA)	68	68	68
3. National (institutional) accrediting bodies	61	59	63
4. Specialized accrediting bodies	47	49	44
5. Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies (AIAB)	41	39	43
6. Assembly of National Postsecondary Education Organizations (ANPEO)	37	38	35
7. Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies (ASAB)	36	33	39

Note: This table represents the views of only those respondents who indicated that either or both institutional and specialized accreditation needed strengthening. This table shows the percentage of those respondents who thought CEOs should be actively involved in the bodies listed.

Table D shows three other means of strengthening accreditation. Four out of five respondents to these items agreed that greater cooperation would work toward this end, and two-thirds agreed that more vigorous application of standards pertaining to learning outcomes would help achieve the goal. Of special interest in a system that prides itself on diversity is the finding that two-thirds of the respondents agreed that regional accreditation would be strengthened if all the regional accrediting bodies had common (national) standards. A somewhat higher percentage of respondents from public than from independent institutions agreed with the latter proposition.

TABLE D—Selected Means of Strengthening Accreditation

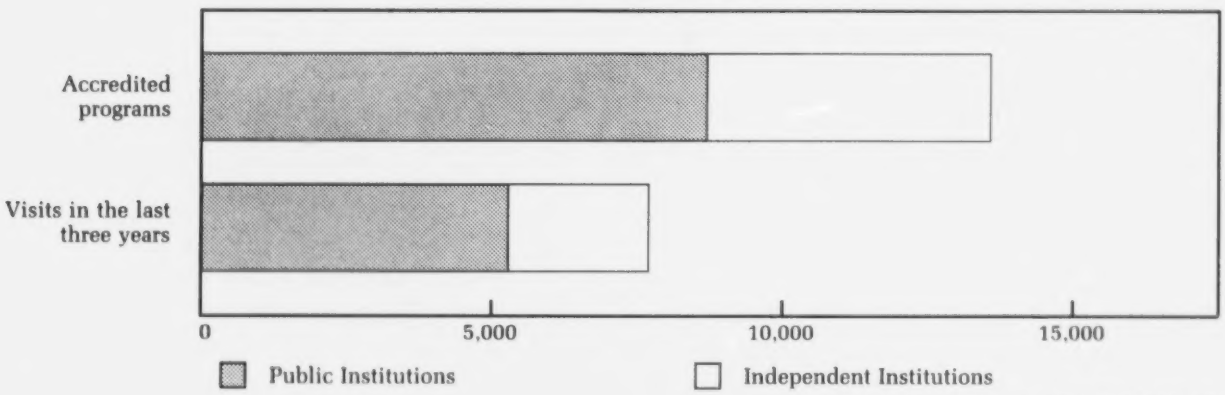
Means of Strengthening Accreditation	Percentage of Respondents[a]		
	All Institutions	Public Institutions	Independent Institutions
1. Greater cooperation among accrediting bodies	83	85	82
2. More vigorous application of standards pertaining to learning outcomes	69	76	62
3. For regional accrediting bodies, existence of common (national) standards	68	72	65

[a]Respondents who indicated that accreditation needed to be strengthened.

III. Specialized Accreditation

Survey data indicate that three-quarters (76 percent) of the nation's colleges and universities have at least one program that is accredited by a specialized accrediting body. The total number of programs with such accreditation is estimated at slightly more than 13,600 programs. Seventy percent of these programs were at public institutions, and thirty percent at independent colleges and universities. Approximately one third—just over 5,000—were at two-year colleges; the remainder were at four-year colleges, universities, and specialized institutions. The average number of accredited programs per institution (with accredited programs) was six; public institutions reported an average of seven, and independent colleges and universities, three. Research universities reported the largest average, with fifteen per institution.

FIGURE D
Programs Accredited and Visits by Specialized Accrediting Bodies



Reference: Detailed Table 4B

Institutions with accredited programs reported that about 7,700 visits were made by the specialized accrediting bodies in the last three years. This results in an average of about one visit per institution per year. Universities had the largest average number of visits, seven per institution in the last three years. Baccalaureate colleges showed the smallest number, an average of two in the same period.

To a question about whether or not the number of visits was too few, too many, or "about right," three-quarters of the respondents answered that the number was "about right." Very few judged the number to be too few, and 22 percent felt there were too many visits (see Detailed Table 4C).

Three-quarters of all respondents indicated that specialized accreditation provided a useful index of program quality. A higher percentage of responses from public institutions (80 percent) than from independent colleges and universities (69 percent) agreed with that statement (see Figure A), Only 68 percent of the respondents from two-year colleges agreed (see Detailed Table 5).

Survey participants were asked to indicate whether or not they agreed with 17 statements about specific issues concerning specialized accreditation. These statements ranged widely, from the matter of costs to incursions on institutional autonomy. Seven of the statements may be considered positive, ten negative.

The statements—be they positive or negative—with which 50 percent or more of the respondents agreed dealt with program content or licensure issues. Seven out of ten respondents agreed that most programs subject to specialized accreditation could benefit from the scrutiny required by the accrediting process. On the other hand, six out of ten agreed that specialized accreditation requirements limited the number of general education courses that students could take, and half agreed that required courses and course sequences were too prescriptive (see Table E).

Regarding licensure, two-thirds of the respondents agreed with the statement that specialized accreditation helped their graduates obtain jobs and licenses. However, six out of ten (58 percent) agreed that the direct link that some specialized accrediting bodies have with licensure increases institutional problems related to control of the programs. And half of the respondents agreed that some links between specialized accreditation and licensure are an inappropriate use of accreditation by the government.

Whereas nearly one-half of the respondents agreed that specialized accreditation activity—self-study and visits—required too much faculty and staff time, only one-third agreed that the dollar costs were too great (see Table E).

Table E—Agreement with Selected Statements Concerning Specialized Accreditation

Item	Percentage of Respondents					
	All Institutions	Universities	Comprehensive Insts.	Baccalaureate Colleges	2-year Colleges	Specialized Insts.
POSITIVE STATEMENTS						
1. Most programs on my campus subject to specialized accreditation benefit from the scrutiny required by specialized accrediting agencies. (a)	70	88	81	70	61	76
2. Specialized accreditation helps our graduates obtain jobs and licenses or other job-related credentials. (g)	67	77	78	76	63	56
3. Specialized accreditation assures me that the standards and quality of my programs are generally acceptable in the postsecondary education community. (b)	66	81	73	73	65	52
4. Specialized accreditation assures that the program is relevant to current practice in the field. (l)	51	55	66	51	50	42
5. Specialized accreditation is a source of low-cost consultation. (d)	36	51	46	35	31	37
6. Specialized accreditation is necessary to recruit and retain faculty. (k)	25	45	44	23	16	30
7. Specialized accreditation means that that I don't need to rely on other means of program evaluation. (c)	7	7	10	7	9	1
NEGATIVE STATEMENTS						
8. Courses and course sequences required by specialized accreditation limit the number of general education courses students can take. (i)	61	65	75	73	56	46
9. The direct link that some specialized accrediting bodies have with licensure increases institutional problems related to control of the program. (q)	58	65	66	68	58	41
10. The direct link that some specialized accrediting bodies have with licensure (e.g., eligibility to sit for the bar exam) is an inappropriate use of accreditation by government. (p)	51	51	49	64	44	49
11. Courses and course sequences required by specialized accreditation are too prescriptive. (h)	50	59	66	64	43	36
12. Course requirements make it difficult for the institution to achieve the breadth of knowledge it wants its graduates to have. (j)	49	59	61	59	47	29
13. The amount of faculty and staff time required for the self-study and visitation is too great. (e)	48	65	59	57	45	31
14. Specialized accreditation contributes to faculty members taking more interest in their programs or disciplines than in their institution. (o)	46	45	59	49	43	38
15. Specialized accreditation results in programs adopting policies and practices that are inconsistent with those of the institution. (n)	40	36	44	43	48	21
16. Specialized accreditation places too much emphasis on the program, to the detriment of the institution and its ability to carry out its mission. (m)	38	42	57	49	33	22
17. The dollar cost is too great. (f)	34	40	40	36	38	20

Note: Letter in parentheses indicate the item's identifier on the survey instrument. See Appendix A.

It was noted in the previous section that there was an almost even split between respondents over the need to strengthen *institutional* accreditation. The issue of strengthening *specialized* accreditation evoked less positive response. Only one out of five respondents agreed that there was such a need. This proportion held true almost across the board, although the respondents from the specialized institutions were even less likely (one in six) to agree (see Figure C).

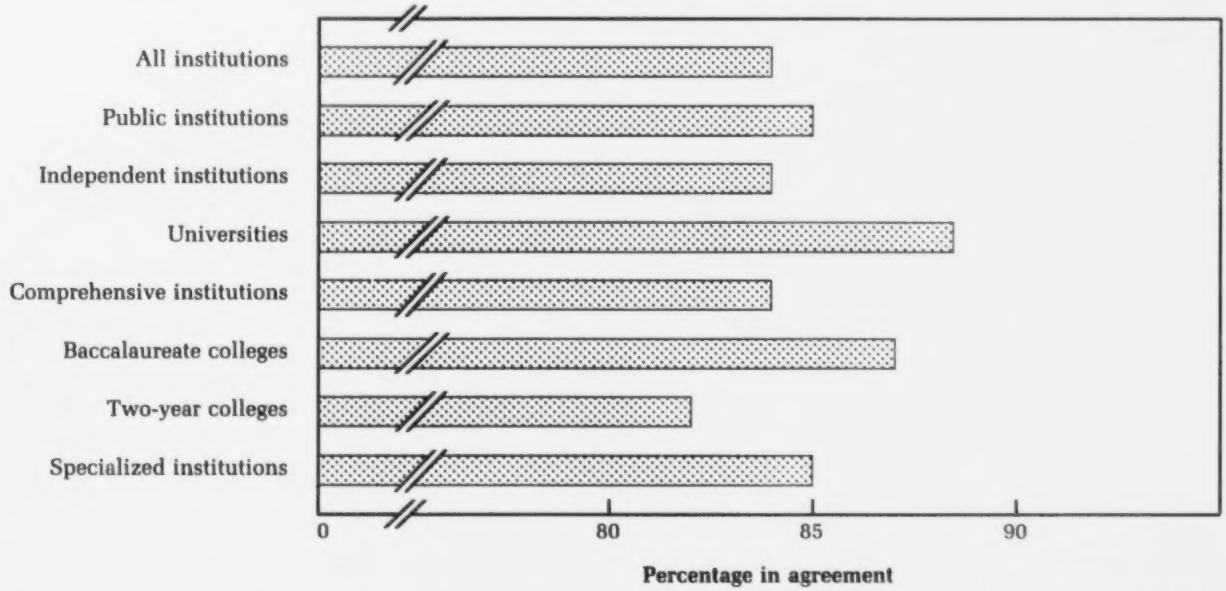
About half of the respondents who indicated that accreditation (either institutional or specialized or both) needed to be strengthened opined that there should be greater CEO participation in the specialized accrediting bodies. This is in contrast with the 92 percent who indicated that there should be greater CEO participation in the regional bodies (Table C).

IV. Opinions on COPA and an Agenda for ANPEO

A key element in the whole accreditation picture, of course, is the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA). Although it does not itself accredit institutions, it "recognizes" those bodies that do the accreditation. It is, however, not the only agency in the country that provides this recognition. Within the Department of Education, the agency evaluation staff of the Office of Postsecondary Education also recognizes accrediting bodies for the purpose of making federal funds available to institutions and their students. Within the higher education community there is concern that the existence of the two national "recognition" agencies is an unnecessary duplication of effort. Thus, this questionnaire asked respondents whether or not they agreed that recognition of accrediting bodies by COPA is a sufficient index of quality and should preclude the federal government's need to compile its own list of recognized accrediting bodies. Eight out of every ten respondents agreed with that statement (see Figure E).

Thus, a large proportion of the higher education community appears to support COPA as the appropriate central agency for the formal recognition of accrediting agencies.

FIGURE E
Respondents Who Agreed That COPA Recognition Should Preclude the Federal Government's Need for Its Own List of Recognized Accrediting Bodies



Reference: Detailed Table 2

Within COPA there are three "assemblies" that offer various constituent groups, such as accrediting agencies and institutional associations, an opportunity to express their concerns. Of special interest to the American Council on Education is the Assembly of National Postsecondary Education Organizations (ANPEO), a group of eight association CEO's (or their designees) and institutional presidents or trustees from the organizations in question. This group, composed principally of presidential organizations, represents the interests of those who have responsibility for the whole institution and whose outlook is broader than that of any one department, school, profession, or technology.

The survey instrument, aimed as it was at the institutional CEO, requested respondents to indicate their perceptions about the importance of twelve courses of action that have been recommended to ANPEO. These are listed in Table F and in Detailed Table 9.

TABLE F—Opinions of the Importance of Selected ANPEO Activities, 1986 (High Ratings)

ANPEO Activity	Percentage of Respondents Who Rated Activity			
	"5" (Most Important)[a]		"5" or "4"	
	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank
1. ANPEO should continue to work to change COPA so that it functions as much as an umbrella organization representing all parties interested in accreditation as it does as an association of accrediting bodies.(c)	15	1	50	4
2. ANPEO should urge COPA to adopt a policy requiring institutional and specialized accrediting bodies to cooperate more, e.g., to coordinate campus visits, to standardize self-study formats, etc. (e)	9	2	59	1
3. ANPEO should urge COPA to require the following as a requirement for recognition of accrediting bodies: accrediting bodies must require institutions and programs to identify (1) the learning outcomes and competencies that students are expected to acquire and (2) the means to be used to assess these outcomes and competencies.(f)	9	2	46	5
4. ANPEO should urge COPA to guide the regional accrediting bodies through a process that results in common (national) standards that can be regionally administered. (d)	7	4	51	3
5. ANPEO should work to have college chief executive officers (CEOs) included as members of COPA's Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies (AIAB) (a)	6	5	44	6
6. ANPEO should organize college and university CEOs to work collectively to eliminate the accrediting bodies' quasi-governmental status which exists because of (1) the tie between accreditation and various state licensing laws and (2) federal statutes relating to the process for determining eligibility for funding. (l)	6	5	41	7
7. ANPEO should urge COPA to publish a monograph for CEOs on "how to make accreditation work for you." (g)	3	7	39	8
8. ANPEO should urge college and university CEOs to become involved in the activities of their institutional accrediting bodies and of the specialized accrediting bodies related to their disciplines or professions. (j)	1	8	53	2
9. ANPEO should work to have college CEOs included as members of COPA's Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies (ASAB). (b)	1	8	29	10
10. ANPEO should urge COPA to urge other postsecondary education associations, such as the Association of Governing Boards, to give ongoing attention to accreditation matters. (k)	1	8	38	9
11. ANPEO should urge COPA to mail in a timely manner to CEOs who request it the synopsis sheet for each accrediting body scheduled for a hearing before the COPA Committee on Recognition. (h)	<1	11	29	10
12. ANPEO should encourage all presidentially based education organizations to publicize in a timely manner through their newsletters the names of the accrediting bodies that are having hearings before COPA's Committee on Recognition. (i)	0	12	27	12

Note: Underlined ranks are shared with another activity. The letter in parentheses after each item is the identifier that appeared on the survey instrument. See Appendix A.

[a]Excludes multiple "most important" ratings.

Only one of these activities was deemed "most important" by more than ten percent of the respondents. That activity is, in essence, an affirmation of what is currently going on within COPA. The three statements that received "most important" ratings from seven to nine percent of the respondents are essentially the same courses of action as those that gained a high percentage of agreement from respondents who thought accreditation needed strengthening (see Table D).

These rather small percentages of "most important" ratings may be due, in part, to editing procedures adopted because of non-standard ratings from nearly one-third of the survey participants. Respondents were instructed to assign the rating of "most important" to only one of the twelve listed courses of action. About 30 percent of the respondents chose to ignore those instructions and gave the top rating to more than one statement. In the editing process, in order to maintain the integrity of the true "most important" ratings, any "multiple most important" ratings were tabulated at the second highest level.

Results of an alternate method of tabulation are shown in the third and fourth data columns of Table F. This method combined the highest rating (5) with the second highest (4) and therefore included the "multiple most important" ratings. This combination of high ratings may be dubbed — for simplicity's sake — the percentage of respondents who consider an activity "very important."

Four courses of action received such "very important" ratings from 50 percent or more of the respondents. They were: (1) encouragement of greater cooperation among accrediting bodies, (2) involvement of college and university CEOs in accrediting body activities, (3) guidance toward the establishment of common standards for the regional accrediting bodies, and (4) continued efforts to change COPA into an "umbrella-type" organization. One of these (involvement of CEOs in accrediting activities) moved from eighth position when only the "most important" ratings were tabulated, to second position when the second highest ratings were included. Detailed Table 9 shows that, with few exceptions, these four courses of action received high ratings (4 or 5) from 50 percent or more of the respondents, no matter from which type of institution they came.

The activity that ranked fifth, receiving "very important" ratings (4 or 5) from 46 percent of the respondents, is related to student assessment—an issue currently being discussed widely on-campus and off. As phrased for this survey, the proposed activity would have ANPEO urge COPA to insist that accrediting bodies require institutions to identify learning outcomes that students would be expected to acquire, and also identify the means for assessing those outcomes. Just over half of the respondents from the specialized and the comprehensive institutions gave this activity high ratings (4 or 5). Comparable ratings were given by 44 and 41 percent of the respondents from two-year and baccalaureate institutions respectively, while 38 percent of the university respondents considered the activity that important (see Detailed Table 9).

Relatively few respondents (22 percent) gave the top two ratings to the proposal that college and university CEOs be included as members of COPA's Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies (ASAB). This contrasts with higher percentages shown for the inclusion of CEOs in the Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies (AIAB) and in accrediting bodies generally (44 percent and 53 percent, respectively). This difference, together with the high proportion of respondents who did not indicate that specialized accreditation needed strengthening (75 percent), and the relatively small degree of participation on specialized accreditation teams (20 percent), may indicate a lack of interest by instititional administrators in increased involvement in the whole issue of specialized accreditation.

SUMMARY

Institutional and specialized accrediting bodies provide useful indices of institutional and program quality, respectively, according to a majority of highly placed officals at the nation's colleges and universities. There is greater agreement concerning the former than the latter, however.

Institutional accreditation was deemed extremely useful as a tool of self-evaluation and as a stimulus for improvement by more than half of the survey participants. Just over half agreed that institutional accreditation should be strengthened, and of these, four-fifths agreed that greater cooperation among accrediting bodies would help accomplish that goal.

Three-quarters of the nation's 3,200 institutions of postsecondary education reported at least one program with specialized accreditation. A total of 13,600 such programs were reported. Approximately 7,700 visits from specialized accrediting bodies were experienced by the institutions over the last three years. Seventy percent of the respondents agreed that the self-study required by specialized accrediting agencies could benefit the relevant programs on their campuses. Another two-thirds agreed that specialized accreditation assured them that the quality of their accredited programs was generally acceptable in the postsecondary education community, and that it helped their graduates obtain job-related credentials.

Less than one-fifth of the respondents agreed that specialized accrediting bodies needed to be strengthened.

Four possible courses of action for the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation's (COPA) Assembly of National Postsecondary Education Organizations were given high ratings of importance by 50 percent or more of the survey respondents. Those activities were the encouragement of greater cooperation among accrediting bodies, involvement of college and university CEOs in accrediting body activities, guidance toward the establishment of common standards for the regional accrediting bodies, and continued efforts to change COPA into an "umbrella-type" organization.

DETAILED STATISTICAL TABLES

TABLE 1—Respondent Experience with Accreditation, by Control and Type of Institution, 1986

Type of Experience	Percentage of Respondents from							
	All Institutions (N = 3253)	Public Institutions (N = 1498)	Independent Insts. (N = 1755)	Universities (N = 165)	Comprehensive Insts. (N = 409)	Baccalaureate Colleges (N = 739)	2-year Colleges (N = 1311)	Specialized Insts. (N = 629)
1. Prepared an institutional self-study or portion of it	94	92	95	95	94	86	95	99
2. Attended meetings of institutional (regional and/or national) accrediting bodies	69	62	74	54	55	66	69	84
3. Prepared a program of self-study or portion of it	68	69	66	70	78	69	64	66
4. Served on a visiting accreditation team for an institutional (regional or national) accrediting body	43	48	39	51	37	36	54	30
5. Served on a specialized accreditation visiting team	21	20	21	29	17	23	22	15
6. Attended meetings of specialized accrediting bodies	18	13	22	20	12	20	10	36
7. Chaired a visiting accreditation team for an institutional (regional or national) accrediting body	17	17	16	17	18	12	24	6
8. Gave a presentation at a meeting of an institutional (regional or national) accrediting body	9	15	4	16	9	8	12	2
9. Served on a commission of an institutional (regional or national) accrediting body	7	8	6	13	4	9	10	1
10. Chaired a specialized accreditation visiting team	5	6	5	11	6	2	7	4
11. Gave a presentation at a meeting of specialized accrediting bodies or their sponsoring organizations	4	4	4	11	4	2	3	8
12. Wrote articles on institutional (regional or national) accreditation	4	3	4	3	2	2	3	8
13. Attended meeting of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA)	3	4	3	3	1	2	7	0
14. Served on a specialized accrediting body commission	3	2	3	6	2	5	1	4
15. Wrote articles on specialized accreditation	2	2	1	3	0	0	2	3
16. Other; (gave presentations at COPA conferences, member of COPA board, etc.)	1	2	0	2	0	1	1	0
17. No experience reported	1	1	1	0	1	4	<1	0

TABLE 2—Opinion Concerning Institutional (Regional and National) Accreditation, by Control and Type of Institution, 1986

Item		Percentage of Respondents from							
		All Institutions (N = 3253)	Public Institutions (N = 1498)	Independent Insts. (N = 1755)	Universities (N = 165)	Comprehensive Insts. (N = 409)	Baccalaureate Colleges (N = 739)	2-year Colleges (N = 1311)	Specialized Insts. (N = 629)
1. Institutional accreditation by regional or national accrediting bodies provides a useful index of institutional quality.	Agree	90	93	88	71	91	92	89	97
	Disagree	9	7	10	25	6	8	10	3
	No answer	1	<1	1	3	3	0	1	0
2. Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) recognition of accrediting bodies is a sufficient index of quality and should preclude the federal government's need to compile its own list of accrediting bodies.	Agree	84	85	84	88	84	87	82	85
	Disagree	10	9	11	7	9	8	10	15
	No answer	6	6	5	5	7	5	8	0
3. Institutional accreditation by regional or national accrediting bodies is a sufficient index of quality and should preclude state involvement in matters of institutional quality.	Agree	61	55	67	52	64	69	60	56
	Disagree	36	42	30	42	33	31	36	39
	No answer	3	3	3	6	3	0	4	5
4. Institutional accreditation by regional or national accrediting bodies is a sufficient index of quality and should preclude the need for specialized accreditation.	Agree	40	39	41	21	29	42	49	31
	Disagree	56	58	54	71	68	57	47	64
	No answer	4	3	4	7	3	1	4	5

Note: Detail may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding.

TABLE 3—Usefulness of Institutional Accreditation for Selected Purposes, by Control and Type of Institution, 1986

Purpose		Percentage of Respondents from							
		All Institutions (N = 3253)	Public Institutions (N = 1498)	Independent Insts. (N = 1755)	Universities (N = 165)	Comprehensive Insts. (N = 409)	Baccalaureate Colleges (N = 739)	2-year Colleges (N = 1311)	Specialized Insts. (N = 629)
1. As a tool for self-evaluation	Extremely useful	63	60	66	60	65	63	60	69
	Useful[a]	36	38	34	40	35	36	39	31
	Not useful[b]	1	1	<1	0	0	1	1	0
	No answer	<1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
2. As a stimulus for improvement	Extremely useful	55	50	59	36	54	51	53	71
	Useful[a]	44	47	40	62	44	47	46	29
	Not useful[b]	1	<1	<1	2	3	1	0	0
	No answer	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	0
3. As a means of demonstrating that an institution has standards that are generally accepted by the postsecondary education community	Extremely useful	45	49	42	41	39	43	50	42
	Useful[a]	52	50	54	57	58	53	49	55
	Not useful[b]	2	1	4	2	3	4	0	3
	No answer	<1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
4. As a criterion for eligibility for federal funds	Extremely useful	22	20	24	17	15	22	24	24
	Useful[a]	60	63	58	49	64	60	58	64
	Not useful[b]	15	16	14	33	20	16	13	13
	No answer	3	2	3	2	1	2	5	0
5. As a means of achieving or reinforcing consensus among the various elements of the institution	Extremely useful	13	13	14	10	14	13	16	9
	Useful[a]	72	76	70	75	70	75	74	66
	Not useful[b]	14	10	16	16	16	12	9	25
	No answer	<1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
6. As a source of low-cost consultation	Extremely useful	13	15	12	11	11	9	20	5
	Useful[a]	63	65	62	56	63	55	61	78
	Not useful[b]	23	20	27	32	26	36	18	16
	No answer	<1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0

Note: Detail may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

[a]Percentage of respondents who rated purpose's usefulness 3 or 4 on a scale of 1 (not useful) to 5 (extremely useful).

[b]Percentage of respondents who rated purpose's usefulness 1 or 2 on a scale of 1 (not useful) to 5 (extremely useful).

TABLE 4A—Percentage of Institutions with Programs Accredited by Specialized Accrediting Bodies, by Control and Type of Institution, 1986

Statement	Percentage of Institutions							
	All Institutions (N = 3253)	Public Institutions (N = 1498)	Independent Insts. (N = 1755)	Universities (N = 165)	Comprehensive Insts. (N = 409)	Baccalaureate Colleges (N = 739)	2-year Colleges (N = 1311)	Specialized Insts. (N = 629)
1. At least one program accredited by a specialized accrediting body.	76	90	64	95	95	81	72	59
2. No programs accredited by a specialized accrediting body reported.	24	10	36	5	5	19	28	41

TABLE 4B—Number of Programs Accredited by Specialized Accrediting Bodies, 1986, and Number of Visits by Specialized Accrediting Bodies in the Last Three Years, by Control and Type of Institution

Item	Control and Type of Institution							
	All Institutions (N = 2463)	Public Institutions (N = 1342)	Independent Insts. (N = 1121)	Universities (N = 157)	Comprehensive Insts. (N = 388)	Baccalaureate Colleges (N = 602)	2-year Colleges (N = 943)	Specialized Insts. (N = 373)
1. Number of accredited programs	13,587	9,725	3,862	2,289	2,905	1,902	5,061	1,429
2. Average number of accredited programs per campus	6	7	3	15	7	3	5	4
3. Number of visits by specialized accrediting bodies in the last 3 years	7,734	5,293	2,441	1,030	1,676	1,156	2,798	1,073
4. Average number of visits per campus in the last 3 years	3	4	2	7	4	2	3	3

Note: Averages show the number of programs or visits at only those campuses that had at least one specialized program or visit, respectively.

TABLE 4C—Opinion on the Frequency of Specialized Accreditation Visits, by Control and Type of Institution, 1986

Opinion Concerning Frequency of Visits	Percentage of Respondents from							
	All Institutions (N = 2463)	Public Institutions (N = 1342)	Independent Insts. (N = 1121)	Universities (N = 157)	Comprehensive Insts. (N = 388)	Baccalaureate Colleges (N = 602)	2-year Colleges (N = 943)	Specialized Insts. (N = 373)
1. There are too many.	22	27	17	43	30	9	27	14
2. There are about the right number.	72	66	79	51	57	84	70	80
3. There are too few.	2	2	1	2	2	4	1	0
4. No opinion.	4	4	4	4	11	3	2	5

Note: Detail may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Data include only institutions that reported at least one program accredited by a specialized accrediting body.

TABLE 5—Opinion Concerning Specialized Accreditation, by Control and Type of Institution, 1986

Statement		Percentage of Respondents from							
		All Institutions (N = 3253)	Public Institutions (N = 1498)	Independent Insts. (N = 1755)	Universities (N = 165)	Comprehensive Insts. (N = 409)	Baccalaureate Colleges (N = 739)	2-year Colleges (N = 1311)	Specialized Insts. (N = 629)
A. Does specialized accreditation provide a useful index of program quality?	Yes	74	80	69	77	82	78	68	79
	No	21	17	23	16	15	19	25	17
	No answer	5	2	7	6	2	3	7	3
POSITIVE STATEMENTS CONCERNING SPECIALIZED ACCREDITATION									
1. Most programs on my campus subject to specialized accreditation benefit from the scrutiny required by specialized accrediting agencies. (a)	Agree	70	80	62	88	81	70	61	76
	Disagree	14	16	12	12	15	16	19	0
	No answer	16	5	26	0	4	14	19	24
2. Specialized accreditation helps our graduates obtain jobs and licenses or other job-related credentials. (g)	Agree	67	78	58	77	78	76	63	56
	Disagree	17	16	18	19	14	11	18	23
	No answer	16	6	24	4	8	13	19	21
3. Specialized accreditation assures me that the standards and quality of my programs are generally acceptable in the postsecondary education community. (b)	Agree	66	80	54	81	73	73	65	52
	Disagree	18	15	21	18	22	16	16	23
	No answer	15	5	24	2	5	12	18	24
4. Specialized accreditation assures that the program is relevant to current practice in the field. (1)	Agree	51	60	43	55	66	51	50	42
	Disagree	35	35	34	45	31	37	32	38
	No answer	14	5	23	0	3	12	18	21
5. Specialized accreditation is a source of low-cost consultant. (d)	Agree	36	39	33	51	46	35	31	37
	Disagree	49	55	44	49	50	54	50	42
	No answer	15	5	23	0	4	11	19	21
6. Specialized accreditation is necessary to recruit and retain faculty. (k)	Agree	25	32	19	45	44	23	16	30
	Disagree	60	63	58	55	53	65	65	49
	No answer	15	5	23	0	3	11	19	21
7. With specialized accreditation the institution need not rely on other means of program evaluation. (c)	Agree	7	9	5	7	10	7	9	1
	Disagree	78	86	71	93	88	83	72	75
	No answer	15	4	24	0	2	10	18	24

TABLE 5—Continued

Statement		Percentage of Respondents from All Institutions (N = 3253)	Public Institutions (N = 1498)	Independent Insts. (N = 1755)	Universities (N = 165)	Comprehensive Insts. (N = 409)	Baccalaureate Colleges (N = 739)	2-year Colleges (N = 1311)	Specialized Insts. (N = 629)
NEGATIVE STATEMENTS CONCERNING SPECIALIZED ACCREDITATION									
1. Courses and course sequences required by specialized accreditation limit the number of general education courses students can take. (i)	Agree	61	66	56	65	75	73	56	46
	Disagree	23	29	18	25	21	12	25	29
	No answer	17	5	26	10	4	15	19	24
2. The direct link that some specialized accrediting bodies have with licensure increases institutional problems related to control of the program. (q)	Agree	58	65	53	65	66	68	58	41
	Disagree	20	24	17	26	18	16	22	24
	No answer	21	11	30	9	16	17	20	35
3. The direct link that some specialized accrediting bodies have with licensure (e.g., eligibility to sit for the bar exam) is an inappropriate use of accreditation by government. (p)	Agree	51	53	49	51	49	64	44	49
	Disagree	29	37	23	35	36	21	36	19
	No answer	20	10	28	15	15	15	20	31
4. Courses and course sequences required by specialized accreditation are too prescriptive. (h)	Agree	50	52	49	59	66	64	43	36
	Disagree	33	42	26	33	25	23	38	43
	No answer	16	7	25	8	10	13	19	21
5. Course requirements make it difficult for the institution to achieve the breadth of knowledge it wants its graduates to have. (j)	Agree	49	54	45	59	61	59	47	29
	Disagree	36	41	32	36	36	28	33	50
	No answer	15	6	23	5	3	13	19	21
6. The amount of faculty and staff time required for the self-study and visitation is too great. (e)	Agree	48	49	47	65	59	57	45	31
	Disagree	36	43	30	33	34	28	35	48
	No answer	16	8	23	2	7	15	19	21
7. Specialized accreditation contributes to faculty members taking more interest in their programs or disciplines than in their institution. (o)	Agree	46	50	42	45	59	49	43	38
	Disagree	38	43	34	52	32	39	38	39
	No answer	16	6	24	2	10	12	18	24
8. Specialized accreditation results in programs adopting policies and practices that are inconsistent with those of the institution. (n)	Agree	40	48	34	36	44	43	48	21
	Disagree	43	46	41	57	47	45	34	55
	No answer	16	6	26	6	9	13	19	24
9. Specialized accreditation places too much emphasis on the program, to the detriment of the institution and its ability to carry out its mission. (m)	Agree	38	39	37	42	57	49	33	22
	Disagree	44	54	36	50	36	37	49	48
	No answer	18	7	27	8	7	14	18	31
10. The dollar cost is too great. (f)	Agree	34	41	28	40	40	36	38	20
	Disagree	49	52	47	58	50	52	42	60
	No answer	16	7	24	2	10	12	20	21

Note: Detail may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Statements are ordered by the percentage of respondents who indicated agreement. Letter in parentheses is the item's identifier on the survey instrument (see Appendix A).

TABLE 6—Need for Strengthening Accreditation, by Control and Type of Institution, 1986

Statement		Percentage of Respondents from: All Institutions (N = 3253)	Public Institutions (N = 1498)	Independent Insts. (N = 1755)	Universities (N = 165)	Comprehensive Insts. (N = 409)	Baccalaureate Colleges (N = 739)	2-year Colleges (N = 1311)	Specialized Insts. (N = 629)
1. Institutional (regional and national) accreditation needs to be strengthened	Agree	52	54	51	53	57	58	56	36
	Disagree	46	45	46	47	41	39	42	64
	No answer	2	1	3	0	2	3	2	0
2. Specialized accreditation needs to be strengthened.	Agree	18	20	16	20	21	18	18	15
	Disagree	75	77	73	80	72	76	72	79
	No answer	8	4	11	0	6	6	11	6

Note: Detail may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

TABLE 7—Recommendations for Presidential Participation in Accrediting Bodies by Control and Type of Institution, 1986

Agencies in Which CEOs Should Become More Actively Involved	Percentage of Respondents* from: All Institutions (N = 1764)	Public Institutions (N = 846)	Independent Insts. (N = 918)	Universities (N = 93)	Comprehensive Insts. (N = 251)	Baccalaureate Colleges (N = 396)	2-year Colleges (N = 745)	Specialized Insts. (N = 278)
1. Regional accrediting bodies	92	92	92	88	83	94	92	97
2. Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA)	68	68	68	86	62	69	68	66
3. Institutional (national) accrediting bodies	61	59	63	78	59	62	56	71
4. Specialized accrediting bodies	47	49	44	61	48	49	40	56
5. COPA's Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies (AIAB)	41	39	43	42	50	44	34	48
6. COPA's Assembly of National Postsecondary Education Organizations (ANPEO)	37	38	35	51	42	37	32	38
7. COPA's Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies (ASAB)	36	33	39	42	42	36	30	45

*Those respondents who indicated that accreditation—either institutional or specialized or both—needs to be strengthened.

TABLE 8—Opinions on Selected Means of Strengthening Accreditation, by Control and Type of Institution, 1986

Means of Strengthening Accreditation		Percentage of Respondents[a] from							
		All Institutions (N = 1764)	Public Institutions (N = 846)	Independent Insts. (N = 918)	Universities (N = 93)	Comprehensive Insts. (N = 251)	Baccalaureate Colleges (N = 396)	2-year Colleges (N = 745)	Specialized Insts. (N = 278)
1. Greater cooperation among accredited bodies, to include coordinating campus visits.	Agree	83	85	82	86	70	79	87	91
	Disagree	14	13	14	14	23	17	10	9
	No answer	2	1	2	0	5	2	1	0
2. More vigorous application of standards pertaining to learning outcomes	Agree	69	76	62	68	68	62	74	63
	Disagree	25	20	28	23	20	31	21	30
	No answer	4	2	5	5	8	3	3	3
3. Regional accreditation would be strengthened if all regional accrediting bodies had common (national) standards	Agree	68	72	65	68	62	63	71	73
	Disagree	27	22	32	29	32	33	23	27
	No answer	2	3	2	2	4	2	3	0

Note: Detail may not sum to 100 because of rounding.
[a]Those respondents who indicated that accreditation—either institutional or specialized or both—needs to be strengthened.

TABLE 9—Opinions Concerning Selected Recommendations for the Assembly of National Postsecondary Education Organizations (ANPEO), by Control and Type of Institution, 1986

Recommendation for ANPEO	Rating	Percentage of Raters							
		All Institutions (N = 3253)	Public Institutions (N = 1498)	Independent Insts. (N = 1755)	Universities (N = 165)	Comprehensive Insts. (N = 409)	Baccalaureate Colleges (N = 739)	2-year Colleges (N = 1311)	Specialized Insts. (N = 629)
1. ANPEO should continued to work to change COPA so that it functions as much as an umbrella organization representing all parties interested in accreditation as it does as an association of accrediting bodies. (c)	Most important 5	15	16	15	13	16	9	18	17
	4	35	40	31	43	37	42	32	28
	3	21	23	20	22	22	19	24	18
	Subtotal 1,2	11	5	15	9	8	12	10	13
	Not important 0	4	3	4	0	4	6	3	3
	No answer	15	14	16	13	14	13	13	21
2. ANPEO should urge COPA to adopt policy requiring institutional and specialized accrediting bodies to cooperate more, e.g., to coordinate campus visits, to standardize self-study formats, etc. (e)	Most important 5	9	10	9	23	4	8	7	14
	4	49	53	46	47	59	47	54	36
	3	20	17	22	13	21	21	18	22
	Subtotal 1,2	9	8	9	9	6	10	5	19
	Not important 0	2	1	3	0	1	4	<1	3
	No answer	11	11	10	8	8	9	16	5
3. ANPEO should urge COPA to adopt the following as a requirement for recognition of accrediting bodies: accrediting bodies must require institutions & programs to identify (1) the learning outcomes and competencies that students are expected to acquire and (2) the means to be used to assess these outcomes and competencies. (f)	Most important 5	9	9	8	0	7	11	9	8
	4	37	36	37	38	45	30	35	43
	3	22	22	22	25	22	23	23	18
	Subtotal 1,2	17	18	17	25	11	26	13	18
	Not important 0	4	4	4	5	6	2	4	5
	No answer	11	11	11	8	8	8	16	9
4. ANPEO should urge COPA to guide the regional accrediting bodies through a process that results in common (national) standards that can be regionally administered. (d)	Most important 5	7	4	9	4	7	12	3	10
	4	44	48	41	52	44	40	45	46
	3	19	21	17	15	19	16	22	15
	Subtotal 1,2	15	13	15	16	21	15	12	14
	Not important 0	4	2	6	2	1	8	3	5
	No answer	12	11	13	12	8	10	16	10
5. ANPEO should work to have college chief executive officers (CEOs) included as members of COPA's Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies (AIAB) (a)	Most important 5	6	6	6	7	5	7	5	9
	4	38	41	35	37	43	42	42	19
	3	25	24	25	29	19	25	22	32
	Subtotal 1,2	13	14	14	11	11	11	11	23
	Not important 0	5	2	7	5	5	4	3	7
	No answer	14	14	14	13	17	11	16	10
6. ANPEO should organize college and university CEOs to work collectively to eliminate the accrediting bodies' quasi-governmental status which exists because of (1) the tie between accreditation and various state licensing laws and (2) federal statutes relating to the process for determining eligibility for funding. (1)	Most important 5	6	6	6	0	5	4	8	5
	4	35	39	32	42	45	32	37	28
	3	27	25	28	29	25	28	21	37
	Subtotal 1,2	17	14	19	17	9	22	14	22
	Not important 0	3	1	4	2	5	3	1	4
	No answer	13	14	12	11	10	10	19	4

TABLE 9—Continued

Recommendation for ANPEO	Rating	Percentage of Raters: All Institutions (N = 3253)	Public Institutions (N = 1498)	Independent Insts. (N = 1755)	Universities (N = 165)	Comprehensive Insts. (N = 409)	Baccalaureate Colleges (N = 739)	2-year Colleges (N = 1311)	Specialized Insts. (N = 629)
7. ANPEO should urge COPA to publish a monograph for CEOs on "how to make accreditation work for you." (g)	Most important 5	3	3	2	3	5	5	3	0
	4	36	34	38	35	34	27	34	52
	3	26	34	20	32	20	24	32	19
	Subtotal 1,2	20	16	24	19	31	31	16	10
	Not important 0	4	2	6	2	2	5	1	10
	No answer	11	11	10	8	8	8	14	9
8. ANPEO should urge college and university CEOs to become involved in the activities of their institutional accrediting bodies and of the specialized accrediting bodies related to their disciplines or professions (j)	Most important 5	1	<1	1	0	1	3	<1	0
	4	52	56	48	55	54	49	52	54
	3	27	24	30	22	18	29	27	34
	Subtotal 1,2	8	7	8	15	15	11	4	4
	Not important 0	3	1	4	0	5	1	2	3
	No answer	10	11	8	8	7	7	15	4
9. ANPEO should work to have college CEOs included as members of COPA's Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies (ASAB). (b)	Most important 5	1	1	1	0	4	1	0	0
	4	28	34	23	32	36	26	32	18
	3	28	23	33	31	19	35	23	37
	Subtotal 1,2	19	20	19	17	17	15	20	27
	Not important 0	6	4	9	9	7	8	5	8
	No answer	17	18	16	13	18	15	21	10
10. ANPEO should urge other postsecondary education associations, such as the Association of Governing Boards, to give ongoing attention to accreditation matters (k)	Most important 5	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
	4	38	39	36	42	48	31	34	45
	3	33	38	28	29	34	31	35	31
	Subtotal 1,2	18	11	23	18	9	27	16	17
	Not important 0	2	1	2	2	4	1	<1	3
	No answer	10	11	9	10	5	10	15	1
11. ANPEO should urge COPA to mail in a timely manner to CEOs who request it the synopsis sheet for each accrediting body scheduled for a hearing before the COPA Committee on Recognition. (The synopsis sheet contains information about the accrediting body.) (h)	Most important 5	<1	<1	0	0	1	0	0	0
	4	29	32	27	38	39	31	28	22
	3	36	38	35	30	37	37	34	41
	Subtotal 1,2	20	18	22	19	17	18	22	21
	Not important 0	3	1	4	0	1	4	1	7
	No answer	11	11	12	12	5	10	15	9
12. ANPEO should encourage all presidentially-based education organizations to publicize in a timely manner through their newsletters the names of the accrediting bodies that are having hearings before COPA's Committee on Recognition. (i)	Most important 5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	4	27	26	28	26	31	33	28	18
	3	37	37	38	47	41	31	32	52
	Subtotal 1,2	20	23	16	18	16	20	23	14
	Not important 0	4	3	5	0	4	6	2	7
	No answer	12	12	12	10	8	10	16	9

Note: Detail may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Recommendations are ordered by the percentage of "most important" ratings (5) from all raters. Letters in parentheses indicate the item's identifier on the survey instrument (see Appendix A).

APPENDIX A: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

American Council on Education
One Dupont Circle
Washington, DC 20036

Higher Education Panel (HEP) Survey No. 74

SURVEY OF ACCREDITATION ISSUES

1. Please indicate the nature of your **direct experience** with the accreditation process. Check all that apply.
I have had the following direct experience(s) with accreditation:

a. Prepared an institutional self-study or portion of it ____
b. Prepared a program self-study or portion of it ____
c. Served on a visiting accreditation team for a regional or national institutional accrediting body ____
d. Chaired a visiting accreditation team for a regional or national institutional accrediting body ____
e. Served on a specialized accreditation visiting team ____
f. Chaired a specialized accreditation visiting team ____
g. Served on a commission of a regional or national institutional accrediting body ____
h. Served on a specialized accrediting body commission ____
i. Served on the Board of Directors of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) ____
j. Served as member of COPA's Assembly of National Postsecondary Education Organizations (ANPEO) ____

Attended annual or semi-annual meetings and/or conferences of—

k. Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) ____
l. Institutional (regional and/or national) accrediting bodies ____
m. Specialized accrediting bodies ____

Gave presentations at annual or semi-annual meetings workshops, and/or conferences of—

n. Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) ____
o. Institutional (regional and/or national) accrediting bodies ____
p. Specialized accrediting bodies or their sponsoring organizations ____

Wrote articles on—

q. Institutional (regional and/or national) accreditation ____
r. Specialized accreditation ____

2. Please indicate whether or not you agree with the following statements.

	Agree	Disagree
a. Recognition of accrediting bodies by COPA is a sufficient index of quality and should preclude the federal government's need to compile its own list of recognized accrediting bodies.	____	____
b. Institutional accreditation by regional or national accrediting bodies provides a useful index of *institutional* quality.	____	____
Institutional accreditation by regional or national accrediting bodies is a sufficient index of quality and should preclude—		
c. state involvement in matters of institutional quality.	____	____
d. the need for specialized accreditation.	____	____

3. Institutional accreditation may be useful for several reasons, some of which are listed below. Indicate your opinion of the usefulness of each by circling the appropriate number.

	Extremely Useful				Not Useful
a. As a tool for self-evaluation	5	4	3	2	1
b. As a stimulus for improvement	5	4	3	2	1
c. As a source of low-cost consultation	5	4	3	2	1
d. As a means of demonstrating that an institution has standards that are generally accepted by the postsecondary education community	5	4	3	2	1
e. As a means of achieving or reinforcing consensus among the various elements of the institution	5	4	3	2	1
e. As a criterion for eligibility for federal funds	5	4	3	2	1
f. Other; specify. _____ _____	5	4	3	2	1

Please continue on next page.

4. a. In your opinion, does **specialized** accreditation provide a useful index of *program* quality? ___ Yes ___ No

   b. On your campus, how many programs are accredited by specialized accrediting bodies? _____

   c. On your campus, how many visits by specialized accrediting bodies did you have in the last three years? _____

   d. This number of specialized accrediting body visits to your campus is:

      (1) Too few. ___

      (2) About the right number. ___

      (3) Too many. ___

5. Please indicate whether or not you agree with the following statements as they relate to your experience with *specialized accreditation*.

	Agree	Disagree
a. Most programs on my campus subject to specialized accreditation could benefit from the self-study/evaluation required by specialized accrediting agencies.	___	___
b. Specialized accreditation assures me that the standards and quality of the program are generally acceptable in the postsecondary education community.	___	___
c. With specialized accreditation I don't need to rely on other means of program evaluation.	___	___
d. Specialized accreditation is a source of low-cost consultation.	___	___
e. The amount of faculty and staff time required for the self-study and visitation is too great.	___	___
f. The dollar cost is too great.	___	___
g. Specialized accreditation helps our graduates obtain jobs and licenses or other job-related credentials.	___	___
h. Courses & course sequences required by specialized accreditation are too prescriptive.	___	___

5. Continued.

	Agree	Disagree
i. Courses & course sequences required by specialized accreditation limit the number of general education courses students can take.	___	___
j. Course requirements make it difficult for the institution to achieve the breadth of knowledge it wants its graduates to have.	___	___
k. Specialized accreditation is necessary to recruit and retain faculty.	___	___
l. Specialized accreditation assures that the program is relevant to current practice in the field.	___	___
m. Too much emphasis is placed on the program to the detriment of the institution and its ability to carry out its mission.	___	___
n. Specialized accreditation results in programs adopting policies and practices that are inconsistent with those of the institution.	___	___
o. Specialized accreditation contributes to faculty members taking more interest in their programs and/or disciplines than in their institution.	___	___
p. The direct link that some specialized accrediting bodies have with licensure (e.g., eligibility to sit for the bar exam) is an inappropriate use of accreditation by government.	___	___
q. The direct link that some specialized accrediting bodies have with licensure increases institutional problems related to control of the program.	___	___

6. Please indicate whether or not you agree with the following statements.

	Agree	Disagree
a. Institutional (regional and national) accreditation needs to be strengthened.	___	___
b. Specialized accreditation needs to be strengthened.	___	___

If you disagree with *both* statements 6.a and 6.b, go directly to item 9.

If you agree with either 6.a or 6.b or both, please complete items 7, 8, and 9.

7. Some maintain that one means of strengthening accreditation is for college and university chief executive officers (CEOs) to become more actively involved in the governance (decision-making process) of accrediting bodies. Indicate in which of the agencies listed below you think college and university CEOs should be actively involved. Check as many as apply.

a. The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) ____
b. COPA's Assembly of National Postsecondary Education Organizations (ANPEO) ____
c. COPA's Assemby of Institutional Accrediting Bodies (AIAB) ____
d. COPA's Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies (ASAB) ____
e. Regional accrediting bodies ____
f. Institutional (national) accrediting bodies ____
g. Specialized accrediting bodies ____
h. Other _____ ____

8. Please indicate whether or not you agree with the following statements.

	Agree	Disagree
a. Accreditation would be strengthened if accrediting bodies would more vigorously apply their standards pertaining to learning outcomes.	____	____
b. Accreditation would be strengthened if the accrediting bodies engaged in greater cooperation, to include coordinating their campus visits.	____	____
c. *Regional* accreditation would be strengthened if all *regional* accrediting bodies had common (national) standards.	____	____

9. To help set the agenda and establish priorities for the Assembly of National Postsecondary Education Organizations (ANPEO), please indicate your assessment of the importance of each of the following statements by circling the appropriate numbers. Please circle number 5 only once, to indicate which, in your opinion, is the *most important* of the several statements.

	Most important (Circle only one.)				Least important	Not important
ANPEO should work to have college chief executive officers (CEOs) included as members of COPA's—						
a. Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies (AIAB).	5	4	3	2	1	0
b. Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies (ASAB).	5	4	3	2	1	0
ANPEO should continue to work—						
c. to change COPA so that it functions as much as an umbrella organization representing all parties interested in accreditation as it does as an association of accrediting bodies.	5	4	3	2	1	0
ANPEO should urge COPA to—						
d. guide the regional accrediting bodies through a process that results in common (national) standards that can be regionally administered.	5	4	3	2	1	0
e. adopt a policy requiring institutional and specialized accrediting bodies to cooperate more, e.g., to coordinate campus visits, to standardize self-study formats, etc.	5	4	3	2	1	0
f. adopt the following as a requirement for recognition of accrediting bodies: accrediting bodies must require institutions and programs to identify (1) the learning outcomes and competencies that students are expected to acquire and (2) the means to be used to assess these outcomes and competencies.	5	4	3	2	1	0

Please continue on next page.

9. Continued.

	Most important (Circle only one.)				Least important	Not important
ANPEO should urge COPA to—						
g. publish a monograph for chief executive officers on "how to make accreditation work for you."	5	4	3	2	1	0
h. mail in a timely manner to CEOs who request it the synopsis sheet for each accrediting body scheduled for a hearing before the COPA Committee on Recognition. (The synopsis sheet contains information about the accrediting body.)	5	4	3	2	1	0
ANPEO should—						
i. encourage all presidentially-based education organizations to publicize in a timely manner through their newsletters the names of the accrediting bodies that are having hearings before COPA's Committee on Recognition.	5	4	3	2	1	0
j. urge college and university CEOs to become involved in the activities of their institutional accrediting bodies and of the specialized accrediting bodies related to their disciplines or professions.	5	4	3	2	1	0
k. urge other postsecondary education associations, such as the Association of Governing Boards, to give ongoing attention to accreditation matters.	5	4	3	2	1	0
l. organize college and university CEOs to work collectively to eliminate the accrediting bodies' quasi-governmental status which exists because of (1) the tie between accreditation and various state licensing laws and (2) federal statutes relating to the process for determining eligibility for funding.	5	4	3	2	1	0

10. Please list any other concerns or issues that should be considered by ANPEO and introduced into COPA discussions.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your cooperation.
Please return this form by August 29.

Higher Education Panel
American Council on Education
One Dupont Circle Suite 829
Washington, DC 20036

Please keep a copy of this survey for your records.

Name of Respondent _____

Title _____

Telephone (_____) _____

If you have any questions or problems concerning this survey, please call the HEP staff collect at (202) 939-9445.

APPENDIX B: TECHNICAL NOTES

The Higher Education Panel (HEP) forms the basis of an ongoing survey research program created in 1971 by the American Council on Education. Its purpose is to conduct specialized surveys on topics of current policy interest to the higher education community.

The Panel is a disproportionate stratified sample of 1,040 colleges and universities, divided into two half-samples of 520 institutions each. The sample was drawn from the more than 3,200 colleges and universities listed in the *Education Directory, Colleges and Universities* published by the U.S. Department of Education's Center for Statistics. The Panel's stratification design is based primarily upon institution type, control, and size. For any given survey, either the entire Panel, a half-sample, or an appropriate sub-group is used.

The survey mechanism relies on a network of campus representatives at institutions whose presidents have agreed to participate. The representatives receive the Panel questionnaires and direct them to the most appropriate campus official for response.

The sample for this study consisted of 520 institutions in one of the half-samples of the panel. The questionnaire was mailed on July 25, 1986. After mail and telephone follow-ups, 374 usable responses, or 72 percent of the half-sample, were received.

Data from the 374 responding institutions were weighted and adjusted to represent 3,253 colleges and universities. Table B-1 shows the stratification design.

As used with all Panel surveys, data received were adjusted for item and institutional nonresponse within each cell. Institutional weights were then applied to make the Panel data representative of the national population.

Table B-2 compares survey respondents and nonrespondents on several variables. Response rates were greater than average among two-year institutions. Lower than average response rates were recorded for independent institutions, universities, and specialized institutions.

TABLE B-1—Stratification Design

Cell	Type of Institution	Enrollment	Population	Respondents
	Total		3,253	374
1	Large public doctorate-granting	[a]	104	38
2	Large private doctorate-granting	[a]	61	16
3	Large public comprehensive	[a]	92	36
4	Large private comprehensive	[a]	27	9
5	Large public specialized	[a]	33	8
6	Large private specialized	[a]	18	3
7	Large public two-year	[a]	43	17
8	Public comprehensive	5,500—8,999	56	13
9	Public comprehensive	‹5,500	108	15
10	Private comprehensive	‹9,000	126	14
11	Public baccalaureate	‹9,000	127	15
12	Private baccalaureate	1,350—8,999	166	22
13	Private baccalaureate	‹1,350	446	26
14	Public specialized	‹9,000	36	2
15	Private religious	‹9,000	303	10
16	Private specialized	‹9,000	239	11
17	Public two-year academic/comprehensive	6,000—8,999	55	16
18	Public two-year academic/comprehensive	4,000—5,999	72	13
19	Public two-year academic/comprehensive	2,000—3,999	155	21
20	Public two-year academic/comprehensive	‹2,000	333	21
21	Private two-year academic/comprehensive	‹9,000	129	12
22	Public two-year occupational	2,500—8,999	63	12
23	Public two-year occupational	‹2,500	221	16
24	Private two-year occupational	‹9,000	240	8

[a]Institutions that meet one or more of the three following criteria: (a) total full-time equivalent (FTE) 1981 enrollment greater than 8,999; (b) FTE 1981 graduate enrollment greater than 749; (c) FY 1979 educational and general expenditures of $35 million or more.

TABLE B-2—Comparison of Respondents and Nonrespondents
(In Percentages)

Control, Type and Size of Institution	Respondent (N = 374)	Nonrespondent (N = 146)	Response Rate
Total	100.0	100.0	71.9
Control			
Public	65.0	56.2	74.8
Independent	35.0	43.8	67.2
Type of Institution			
University	14.4	19.2	65.9
Comprehensive	23.3	24.7	70.7
Baccalaureate	16.8	15.8	73.3
Two-Year	36.4	21.2	81.4
Specialized	9.1	19.2	54.8
Full-time equivalent (FTE) Enrollment			
Less than 1,000	21.9	26.0	68.3
1,000–4,999	39.0	38.4	72.3
5,000–9,999	20.6	17.1	75.5
10,000 +	18.4	18.5	71.9

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American Council on Education

Atelsek, Frank J. and Gomberg, Irene L. **Special Programs for Female and Minority Graduate Students.** Higher Education Panel Report, No. 41, November, 1978.

Gomberg, Irene L. and Atelsek, Frank J. **The Institutional Share of Undergraduate Financial Assistance, 1976-77.** Higher Education Panel Report, No. 42, May, 1979.

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Andersen, Charles J. and Atelsek, Frank J. **An Assessment of College Student Housing and Physical Plant.** Higher Education Panel Report, No. 55, October, 1982.

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Andersen, Charles J. **Student Quality in the Humanities: Opinions of Senior Academic Officials.** Higher Education Panel Report, No. 59, February, 1984.

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